

pollution control facilities, rather than solid waste management units.

Similarly, requirements for liners for coal ash ponds vary State by State. For example, Alabama and Florida do not require liners for surface impoundments for coal ash, while Wisconsin does.

The argument that all States have adequate regulations for coal ash is not substantiated by the facts. It is impossible to write off the disaster in Tennessee as a freak accident. The absence of national standards for coal ash has resulted in environmental damage throughout the country—not just last month, or last year, but for decades. In 2007, the EPA recognized 67 contaminated sites in 23 states where coal combustion byproducts have polluted groundwater or surface water. This may be just the tip of the iceberg, because most coal ash sites in the United States are not adequately monitored.

The “Coal Ash Reclamation and Environmental Safety Act of 2009” requires minimum design and stability standards for all surface impoundments constructed to hold coal ash. The bill draws on the regulatory model for impoundments that is used for coal slurry management under the Surface Mining Control and Reclamation Act of 1977. Requirements for coal slurry impoundments that would be made applicable to coal ash impoundments under 2 this legislation cover aspects of design, construction, operation, and closure, including:

Regulations detailing the engineering and stability of the embankment.

Regulations requiring all applications for an impoundment to have a foundation investigation to determine design requirements for stability.

Each design plan must include a geotechnical investigation of the embankment foundation area.

Each impoundment plan must include a survey describing the potential effect on the structure from subsidence of the subsurface strata resulting from past mining operations in the area.

Plans for impoundments must be reviewed by a geologist or an engineer.

Regulations requiring that a qualified engineer, with experience in construction of impoundments, inspect each impoundment regularly during construction, upon completion of construction, and periodically thereafter.

The “Coal Ash Reclamation and Environmental Safety Act of 2009” also requires immediate development of a detailed inventory and analysis of all existing coal ash disposal sites, to guide informed and prompt decisions on how to bring that universe of ponds and lagoons up to safe standards, now.

For States that already have careful standards for coal ash disposal, the bill I am introducing will not be a problem. For those that do not, the “Coal Ash Reclamation Environmental Safety Act of 2009” will require immediate attention to shocking gaps in coal ash management.

As a witness at our hearing last year so presciently reminded the Subcommittee on Energy and Minerals: “the cost of safe disposal [of coal ash] is not burdensome to industry, although it has proved, at site after site, to be catastrophic to the public and the environment.”

The time to act is now.

THE INTRODUCTION OF THE MARINE TURTLE CONSERVATION REAUTHORIZATION ACT OF 2009: JANUARY 9, 2009

HON. HENRY E. BROWN, JR.

OF SOUTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, January 14, 2009

Mr. BROWN of South Carolina. Madam Speaker, I am today pleased to introduce the Marine Turtle Conservation Reauthorization Act of 2009.

There are 7 species of marine turtles which were once abundant throughout the Atlantic, Indian, and Pacific Oceans. Sadly, 6 of those species including the Green turtle, the hawksbill, the Kemp's ridley, the leatherback, the loggerhead and the Olive ridley, have experienced tremendous over-exploitation and they are now listed as critically endangered under our Endangered Species Act. In fact, only the flatback turtle which lives in the inshore waters of Australia has managed to maintain a healthy population.

While there are many reasons for the dramatic decline in marine turtle population numbers, the leading factors include foreign fishing practices, the destruction of essential nesting habitat, massive poaching of turtle eggs, meat and shells, the degradation of grass beds and coral reefs, light pollution from onshore development and the dumping of tons of plastic products into our oceans.

In response to this crisis, the Congress enacted the Marine Turtle Conservation Act of 2004 which I strongly supported. While this law authorized up to \$20 million in Federal funds over the past 4 fiscal years, only \$2.2 million has been appropriated to finance worthwhile conservation projects. Despite these funding limitations, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has leveraged nearly \$4 million in private matching funds and together this money has funded 78 meritorious conservation projects in more than 60 countries. While more than 200 grant proposals have been submitted, sadly, the Service has only awarded grants to less than 40 percent of the eligible recipients.

Nevertheless, a number of extraordinary projects have been funded. These included a project to assist loggerhead turtles in Oman which has the largest nesting population of this species in the world; a project to protect leatherback turtles at their 4 primary nesting beaches in Mexico and a project to assist the highly depleted Chiriqui Beach hawksbill nesting population in Panama.

Madam Speaker, marine turtles have been a vital component of our ocean ecosystems for more than 100 million years. They have long symbolized longevity, fertility and strength. We are proud of the fact that populations of loggerhead sea turtles nest on our beaches in South Carolina where they are highly protected.

Like canaries in a coal mine, declining populations of marine sea turtles are a bellwether species for the health of the world's oceans. The Marine Turtle Conservation Act of 2004 sent a powerful message of the international community that the United States was willing to take proactive conservation efforts to save these flagship species from extinction. It is essential that this law which has yet to reach its full potential be reauthorized beyond this fiscal year.

The legislation I am introducing today would extend the authorization of appropriations for the Marine Turtle Conservation Fund until September 30, 2014. Despite severe funding limitations, this law has conclusively demonstrated that it is an effective and essential lifeline to marine turtle populations throughout the world. We should not allow any of these 6 species of marine turtles to disappear during our lifetime.

I urge early consideration of the Marine Turtle Conservation Reauthorization Act of 2009.

CONGRATULATING HOSTELLING INTERNATIONAL USA

HON. SUE WILKINS MYRICK

OF NORTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, January 14, 2009

Mrs. MYRICK. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize Hostelling International USA for 75 years of service to intercultural understanding and youth travel.

Hostelling International USA is a nonprofit organization founded in 1934 to promote hostels and hostel-related programs in the United States, especially among youth travelers. In doing so, it promotes cultural exchange through travel and supports tourism for local economies.

The North Carolina Council of Hostelling International USA promotes hostelling in North Carolina by offering workshops on world travel and intercultural understanding at local venues, including NC college campuses and through local Girl Scout troops. During the past year, the NC Council funded overnight stays for 51 young people and their group leaders, allowing them to stay at hostels in the Blue Ridge Mountains of Virginia, Philadelphia's Fairmont Park, and Washington, DC.

I congratulate Hostelling International USA for its 75 years of service to our country and our state.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. STEVE KAGEN

OF WISCONSIN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, January 14, 2009

Mr. KAGEN. Madam Speaker, I deeply regret that I was not able to vote on H. Res. 34 recognizing Israel's right to defend itself against attacks from Gaza and reaffirming the United States' strong support for Israel, and supporting the Israeli-Palestinian peace process. On Wednesday, January 7, 2009, I had surgery on my knee and was not able to be present for voting.

Make no mistake about it, I fully support Israel's right to defend itself against all attacks. I would have wholeheartedly voted for H. Res. 34.

Presently, Israel, like any other country, is exercising its right to self-defense. If any country were attacked like Israel has been they would do the same.

How many attacks on an American city would we tolerate from our neighbors? Zero.

In July 2008, I visited Sderot, an Israeli town just over the border from Gaza. I toured sites where Israeli homes were destroyed by rockets launched from Gaza. I met with the U.S.